



Dear Incoming Sophomore Class of 2025-2026,

Congratulations! You have successfully met the criteria to advance into your sophomore year of high school.

I know you must be excited! You're no longer the youngest of the bunch! You should be proud of yourselves! I'm sure you're all looking forward to meeting your new teachers, and to continue building on the friendships, both old and new, you made this past year.

I know 9th grade was challenging, but it is essential to carry the momentum of the year through the summer in order to best set yourselves up for success in the coming school year. With this in mind, I am asking you to read and annotate one novel during your summer.

One of our primary goals is to develop lifelong readers and learners. In addition to this, as rising sophomores, our goal is to prepare you for the rigor and critical thinking that will be expected of you in the upper half of your high school years, college, and the real world. Summer reading is an opportunity for you to practice the comprehension, analytical, and annotation skills learned throughout the year while reading a thought-provoking and enjoyable book. **Your assignment consists of reading and annotating one novel of your choice from the list on the following pages.** There are further details and directions below.

You are now entering a whole new chapter of your life, one filled with exciting challenges and difficult decisions. Build upon your hard work by actively practicing time management. There will be times you are so stressed you will want to drop everything. There will be times you fall behind. Learning how to manage your time and allocate your brain power is a huge advantage. Please take this to heart. Finally, remember that you are not alone! If you have a question or if you fall behind, say something! You all have the resources to succeed.

Please turn in your summer assignment on the first day of school. Your grade will be deducted 10 points for each day late, and will not be accepted after 3 schooldays. Do not hesitate to email me with any questions or concerns. I want to wish you good luck this year in everything that you do. I'm looking forward to an amazing year for all of us!

Sincerely,

Ms. Harris

Whitney Harris

English Department Chair

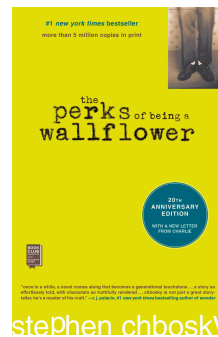
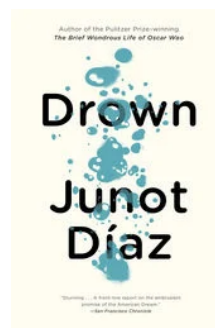
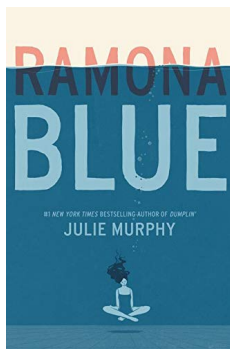
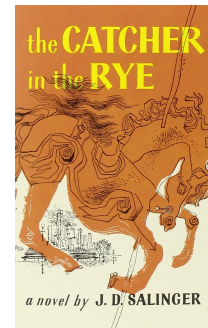
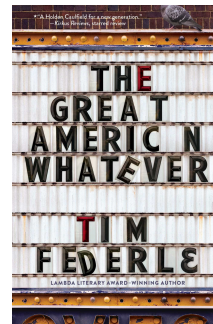
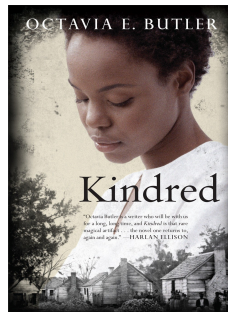
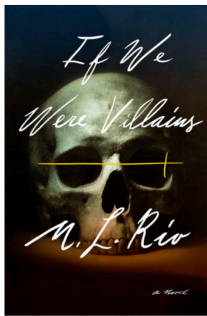
BelovED Community Charter School Network

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2025-2026 10th Grade Summer Reading Task

Part I: Fiction Text

★ Read ONE of the fiction options from the list below. While you read, you should annotate in your novel. **You should annotate a physical copy of the novel-- if you choose to read a digital version, it is your responsibility to print a PDF of the novel and annotate it directly.** Your annotations will help you prepare for a writing activity we will be working on during the first few weeks of school.



***If We Were Villains* by M.L. Rio:** Oliver Marks has just served ten years in jail - for a murder he may or may not have committed. On the day he's released, he's greeted by the man who put him in prison. Detective Colborne is retiring, but before he does, he wants to know what really happened a decade ago. As one of seven young actors studying Shakespeare at an elite arts college, Oliver and his friends play the same roles onstage and off: hero, villain, tyrant, temptress, ingénue, extra. But when the casting changes, and the secondary characters usurp the stars, the plays spill dangerously over into life, and one of them is found dead. The rest face their greatest acting challenge yet: convincing the police, and themselves, that they are blameless.

***Kindred* by Octavia Butler:** The first science fiction written by a black woman, *Kindred* has become a cornerstone of black American literature. This combination of slave memoir, fantasy, and historical fiction is a novel of rich literary complexity. Having just celebrated her 26th birthday in 1976 California, Dana, an African-American woman, is suddenly and inexplicably wrenched through time into antebellum Maryland. After saving a drowning white boy there, she finds herself staring into the barrel of a shotgun and is transported back to the present just in time to save her life. During numerous such time-defying episodes with the same young man, she realizes the challenge she's been given...

***The Great American Whatever* by Tim Federle:** Quinn Roberts is a sixteen-year-old smart aleck and Hollywood hopeful whose only worry used to be writing convincing dialogue for the movies he made with his sister Annabeth. Of course, that was all before—before Quinn stopped going to school, before his mom started sleeping on the sofa...and before Annabeth was killed in a car accident. Enter Geoff, Quinn's best friend who insists it's time that Quinn came out—at least from hibernation. One haircut later, Geoff drags Quinn to his first college party, where instead of nursing his pain, he meets a guy—a hot one—and falls hard. What follows is an upside-down week in which Quinn begins imagining his future as a screenplay that might actually have a happily-ever-after ending—if, that is, he can finally step back into the starring role of his own life story.

***The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger:** The narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is a child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices—but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvelously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for, himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep.

***Ramona Blue* by Julie Murphy:** Ramona was only five years old when Hurricane Katrina changed her life forever. Since then, it's been Ramona and her family against the world. Standing over six feet tall with unmistakable blue hair, Ramona is sure of three things: she likes girls, she's fiercely devoted to her family, and she knows she's destined for something bigger than the trailer she calls home in Eulogy, Mississippi. But juggling multiple jobs, her flaky mom, and her well-meaning but ineffectual dad forces her to be the adult of the family. Now, with her sister, Hattie, pregnant, responsibility weighs more heavily than ever. The return of her childhood friend Freddie brings a welcome distraction. Ramona's friendship with the former competitive swimmer picks up exactly where it left off, and soon he's talked her into joining him for laps at the pool. But as Ramona falls in love with swimming, her feelings for Freddie begin to shift too, which is the last thing she expected. With her growing affection for Freddie making her question her sexual identity, Ramona begins to wonder if perhaps she likes girls and guys or if this new attraction is just a fluke. Either way, Ramona will discover that, for her, life and love are more fluid than they seem.

***Drown* by Junot Diaz:** With ten stories that move from the barrios of the Dominican Republic to the struggling urban communities of New Jersey, Junot Diaz makes his remarkable debut. Diaz's work is unflinching and strong, and these stories crackle with an electric sense of discovery. Diaz evokes a world in which fathers are gone, mothers fight with grim determination for their families and themselves, and the next generation inherits the casual cruelty, devastating ambivalence, and knowing humor of lives circumscribed by poverty and uncertainty. In *Drown*, Diaz has harnessed the rhythms of anger and release, frustration and joy, to indelible effect.

***The Perks of Being A Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky:** This is the story of what it's like to grow up in high school. More intimate than a diary, Charlie's letters are singular and unique, hilarious and devastating. We may not know where he lives. We may not know to whom he is writing. All we know is the world he shares. Caught

between trying to live his life and trying to run from it puts him on a strange course through uncharted territory. The world of first dates and mixtapes, family dramas and new friends. The world of sex, drugs, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, when all one requires is that the perfect song on that perfect drive to feel infinite. Through Charlie, Stephen Chbosky has created a deeply affecting coming-of-age story, a powerful novel that will spirit you back to those wild and poignant roller coaster days known as growing up.

***Such A Fun Age* by Kiley Reid:** A striking and surprising debut novel from an exhilarating new voice, *Such a Fun Age* is a page-turning and big-hearted story about race and privilege, set around a young black babysitter, her well-intentioned employer, and a surprising connection that threatens to undo them both. Alix Chamberlain is a woman who gets what she wants and has made a living, with her confidence-driven brand, showing other women how to do the same. So she is shocked when her babysitter, Emira Tucker, is confronted while watching the Chamberlains' toddler one night, walking the aisles of their local high-end supermarket. The store's security guard, seeing a young black woman out late with a white child, accuses Emira of kidnapping two-year-old Briar. A small crowd gathers, a bystander films everything, and Emira is furious and humiliated. Alix resolves to make things right. But Emira herself is aimless, broke, and wary of Alix's desire to help. At twenty-five, she is about to lose her health insurance and has no idea what to do with her life. When the video of Emira unearths someone from Alix's past, both women find themselves on a crash course that will upend everything they think they know about themselves, and each other. With empathy and piercing social commentary, *Such a Fun Age* explores the stickiness of transactional relationships, what it means to make someone family, and the complicated reality of being a grown up.

Annotation Guidelines

Your annotations should focus on **analyzing** the novel, not merely summarizing or reacting to your reading. Use the following guidelines to help ensure you are engaging critically with the text and practicing your analysis skills.

- (Q) Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
- (C) Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
- (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what's in the passage
- (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
- (R) Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense –
What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
- (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about what the author is trying to say, including the literary techniques (s)he is using to communicate the message

PART II: *Optional* Extra Credit

Creative Assignment

Complete ONE of the following assignments **for extra credit** based on your chosen novel. You will complete this assignment on a separate document or platform that you will share with me by the first day of school. **Late extra credit assignments will not be accepted.**

☐ Poem or Lyrics

- Write a poem or song (40 line minimum) to represent a major theme, character, motif, phrase, piece of dialogue, or plot element of your choice. Then write two paragraphs explaining how the poem or song relates and represents your reading.
- The poem or song must have a title.
- Use descriptive words and figurative language.

☐ TikTok Journal

- Create a TikTok account dedicated **only** to this project.
- Record a series of TikTok videos based on your novel. You should create a minimum of five (5) videos. Any additional videos you create would be appreciated and encouraged, but optional:
 - **TikTok #1:** Record a book review. What are your thoughts on the book as a whole? Thumbs up? Thumbs down? What did you like or dislike? Check out other TikTok book reviews to see some models. #BookTok
 - **TikTok #2-4:** Reenact three favorite scenes from the novel. You may involve parents, siblings, friends--or even pets!--to take on the character roles, in addition to yourself. Or, if you want to do some inventive editing and costume work, you can play all the characters yourself.
 - **TikTok #5:** Find an existing sound on TikTok that relates to your book in some way. Create a video that demonstrates how the sound ties into the novel.

☐ Playlist

- Brainstorm ten (10) songs that would work as a “soundtrack” to the novel.
- Create a slideshow or a list of the songs. For each one, include the song’s title, musical artist, and a 2-3 sentence explanation of how it fits a scene or character in the novel. Your list or slideshow should be colorful and inviting for the viewer. All of your writing should be proofread. Be sure to include specific text evidence to support your choices.

❑ Graphic Novel

- Design and illustrate a graphic novel (comic book) version of an important scene from the novel.
- Your graphic novel should be at least five pages in length. If you are artistically gifted, this is an opportunity to show what you can do!

❑ Social Media Profile

- Create social media profiles for three characters in your novel.
- Each character's social media profile should include captioned photos, a full character bio, and at least five (5) "posts." Should be based on *Instagram*, *Facebook*, or *Twitter*.
- There should be communication between the characters as if they are experiencing the events of the novel in real time.
- You may create actual accounts or simply create "mock" accounts on Google Docs or Google Slides.